

# DISCERNING DANIEL

## The Fatal Feast of Belshazzar

Text: Daniel 5:1-17

Introduction: King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon died in August of \_\_\_\_\_ B.C. His son, Evil-Merodach reigned for a couple of years until he was executed by conspirators inspired by Nebuchadnezzar's brother-in-law Neriglissar. This usurper of the throne reigned for a \_\_\_\_\_ years until he died in battle. His son Laborosoarched became king, but was assassinated within a year of ascending the throne.

In \_\_\_\_\_ B.C., Nabonidus, another son of Nebuchadnezzar became king of the Babylonian Empire. His son, the \_\_\_\_\_ of Nebuchadnezzar, was named Belshazzar. His father, king of the empire, made Belshazzar king over the \_\_\_\_\_ of Babylon. (The Hebrew word translated son can also mean \_\_\_\_\_.)

Remember what a city it was! The Greek historian Herodotus said of the city of Babylon, "It surpasses the splendor of any city of the known world." The city had both an inner and an outer wall. Herodotus said the outer wall, made of brick, was \_\_\_\_\_ ft. high and \_\_\_\_\_ ft. thick! Some 250 defense \_\_\_\_\_ stood on top of the walls around the perimeter of the city, overlooking a gigantic \_\_\_\_\_ that surrounded the entire structure. The moat was kept full by the waters of the Euphrates River which ran through the city, with walls built on its banks.

The streets that met the walls were controlled by huge brass gates that opened to \_\_\_\_\_ that carried people and carts from one side of the river to the other. The central avenue of the city had a humongous \_\_\_\_\_ that connected the two halves of the metropolis. At each end of the bridge a beautiful \_\_\_\_\_ was constructed. Running beneath the Euphrates River, a \_\_\_\_\_ connected the two royal residences.

Near one of the palaces stood the ancient \_\_\_\_\_ a seven level ziggurat with the \_\_\_\_\_ of the pagan god Bel-Merodach at its peak. The base of the tower was 300 ft. square, and 110 ft. in height. The temple on top (a level of \_\_\_\_\_ ft. above the ground) and was 60 x 80 ft. and 50 ft. high. Inside was the most expensive furniture ever found in a place of worship. The value of these furnishings today would be measured in \_\_\_\_\_ of dollars.

When Belshazzar began to reign over the city, Babylon was at the \_\_\_\_\_ of its glory. \_\_\_\_\_ years into the reign of Nabonidus, his son hosted the famous fatal feast.

**Daniel 5:1-4** 1 Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand. 2 While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar gave the command to bring the gold and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple which had been in Jerusalem, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. 3 Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken from the temple of the house of God which had been in Jerusalem; and the king and his lords, his wives, and his

**concubines drank from them. 4 They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone.**

This fateful night marked the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Babylonian Empire. It was the year foretold in Nebuchadnezzar's dream where the head of \_\_\_\_\_ of the statue changed to the chest and arms of \_\_\_\_\_.

Like his grandfather before him, Belshazzar was a \_\_\_\_\_ and haughty man. Although he had ample example from what happened to granddad, he failed to gain any wisdom that led him to \_\_\_\_\_ or to acknowledge the One True and Living God. In fact, during all of these seventeen years, neither Belshazzar nor his father ever called for Daniel, who is known by everyone as a man in whom is the Spirit of the \_\_\_\_\_ God.

But Belshazzar was not interested in Holy God. He lived for excess, for \_\_\_\_\_, for the abandonment of reason in drunkenness and all forms of licentiousness. Such was the banquet he threw on this night recorded in history as well as in the Word of God.

- Perhaps it was the \_\_\_\_\_ once again boiling the neurons of his brain.
- Perhaps it was his arrogant pride, desiring to further impress his subjects and his \_\_\_\_\_.
- Perhaps it was his \_\_\_\_\_ at the God of Israel, whose people they had so easily conquered.

We do not really know the motivations of his heart; we can only see the foolishness of his actions. Belshazzar called for the servants to go to the royal treasury and fetch the gold and silver vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had stolen from God's temple in \_\_\_\_\_ before they utterly destroyed it. In \_\_\_\_\_ of Yahweh God Who was worshipped in that temple, Belshazzar led his people to drink to the honor of the false gods of gold, silver, wood, and stone.

And all of this insolent blasphemy coming from Belshazzar at his banquet was done without \_\_\_\_\_ of either God or man.

- Who has \_\_\_\_\_ as tall as his?
- Who lives in a \_\_\_\_\_ city as strong as his?
- Who has an \_\_\_\_\_ to protect him such as his?

Belshazzar does not know that while he laughs and drinks and scoffs at God, that King Darius, the \_\_\_\_\_, has positioned his troops just outside of the city of Babylon. But worse than that for Belshazzar is that the Holy God he ridicules is in the very \_\_\_\_\_.

Galatians 6:7–8 7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

Oliver Green wrote, "The God of heaven is great in mercy and slow to anger. He is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But there is a \_\_\_\_\_, even with the God of divine \_\_\_\_\_." When Belshazzar and his guests lifted the vessels God declared to be holy unto Himself as instruments of honor and praise, to gods made of metal and rock which could not even speak, the Scripture declares ...

**Daniel 5:5-6** 5 In the same hour the fingers of a man’s hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. 6 Then the king’s countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his hips were loosened and his knees knocked against each other.

When God’s hour of \_\_\_\_\_ comes, nothing can hold it back! A hand \_\_\_\_\_ to arm or body began to write upon the wall. The raucous laughter ceased. The loud conversation of people full of liquor and full of themselves died away. Every eye tried to focus upon the hand and the writing.

The \_\_\_\_\_ countenance of the king was suddenly filled with fear and dread. His mind raced but could not come to a finish line. His strength abandoned him. His legs would not hold him. His body \_\_\_\_\_.

As suddenly as it had appeared, the hand was gone; but the writing \_\_\_\_\_ upon the wall. It was in Aramaic, so they could read the three words, one written \_\_\_\_\_; but they had no idea what they meant. Translated the words read,

**Numbered  
Numbered**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Divided**

**Daniel 5:7-9** The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. The king spoke, saying to the wise men of Babylon, “Whoever reads this writing, and tells me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around his neck; and he shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.” Now all the king’s wise men came, but they could not read the writing, or make known to the king its interpretation. Then King Belshazzar was greatly troubled, his countenance was changed, and his lords were astonished.

So Belshazzar did what Babylonian kings do: he called for his astrologers and soothsayers. Notice that \_\_\_\_\_ is not in the mix of those who were called. These were the men who practice the occult arts, the forbidden things. They had no idea what the writing meant because the hand and the message came from God. What power they possessed came from the demons who possessed them, and the devil and his followers do not know the things of God.

1 Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

I wonder if Daniel ever felt \_\_\_\_\_. He became a close \_\_\_\_\_ of Nebuchadnezzar, but when Belshazzar was given control of the city, Daniel was not called to come to the halls of power for seventeen long years. But Daniel’s testimony in word and life had remained \_\_\_\_\_ and faithful. Often times there are people in our lives to whom we have witnessed in word and deed but who do not want to \_\_\_\_\_ our testimony or God’s truth. It is not our role to \_\_\_\_\_ the Word upon them. Like

Daniel, we are to be faithful to be a \_\_\_\_\_ when given the opportunity and to live a life that is a constant \_\_\_\_\_ of the reality of the Word within us. Sometimes we must do this for many years, as Daniel did; but suddenly, without warning, God creates a \_\_\_\_\_ in their life. Then they \_\_\_\_\_, or God has somebody nearby that reminds them that there is a person who knows the answer!

**Daniel 5:10-12** The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came to the banquet hall. The queen spoke, saying, “O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts trouble you, nor let your countenance change. There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God. And in the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him; and King Nebuchadnezzar your father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers. Inasmuch as an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belshazzar, now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation.”

Once forgotten, now remembered! Notice, however, that Daniel was \_\_\_\_\_. He was not wounded, \_\_\_\_\_, resentful, or \_\_\_\_\_. He did not try to make the king \_\_\_\_\_ or grovel. Daniel was ever ready to bring the Word of the Lord. Are we?

**Daniel 5:13-17** Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke, and said to Daniel, “Are you that Daniel who is one of the captives from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah? I have heard of you, that the Spirit of God is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. Now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not give the interpretation of the thing. And I have heard of you, that you can give interpretations and explain enigmas. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.” Then Daniel answered, and said before the king, “Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another; yet I will read the writing to the king, and make known to him the interpretation.

When people are in \_\_\_\_\_, that is the time to be ready with God’s truth! People who repeatedly reject God’s truth seldom become open to hearing it by \_\_\_\_\_ or mere \_\_\_\_\_. God must bring them to a point of crisis where they see that their \_\_\_\_\_ does not work, offers no help for the crisis at hand. This is often true of people involved in \_\_\_\_\_, Christian cults and non-christian cults alike. They are so \_\_\_\_\_ that they have learned an answer for every argument that can be made. Only when they discover that what they believe will not \_\_\_\_\_ them in a great crisis, are they open to hearing the truth.

Such was Belshazzar. Before him is the most important \_\_\_\_\_ ever brought to him, and his own beliefs and his own religious advisors cannot tell him what it means. Suddenly, God has Belshazzar ready to hear some \_\_\_\_\_.